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THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

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6 April 1984

National Intelligence Officers

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

THROUGH: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [REDACTED]
National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

SUBJECT: Warning and Forecast Report for Latin America
March 1984

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1. The following items were discussed at the Warning and Forecast Meeting held on 28 March 1984.

Nicaragua:Economic and Military

2. Mining operations threaten to close the ports at Sandino and Corinto. The question is: will the ports remain closed? Already, Nicaragua is low on monetary reserves and is using gold to finance imports. Oil supplies are good for six weeks, perhaps as much as three months, and the Nicaraguan military capability is not likely to be seriously impaired because of minimal requirements. The Nicaraguan government will have to decide how to deal with the mining, and the Soviets or the Cubans may have to make decisions too, should their help be requested, that could lead to a major escalation of their military assistance roles in Nicaragua--for example, if warships are dispatched. If mining continues, the alternative to clearing the ports is to starve for oil and other import commodities, there being an estimated three weeks to three months supply of the latter on hand, depending on the category. Exports also would be a problem: the only other ocean port on the Pacific is San Juan del Sur, and this would require cumbersome lightering of cargo.

3. This has caused a psychological and political impact too in particular on government leadership and on the decisions needed to cope with shortages and the difficulties of supply.

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4. Questions arising from this situation are the following:

Will the ports remain closed?

If mining continues, what steps will the Nicaraguan government take to open the ports?

Who will the Nicaraguans ask to help them with the minesweeping? The Soviets? The Cubans? Others?

How susceptible are the mines to being swept or neutralized?

What effect does the closing of the ports have on morale and internal support of the regime?

To what degree is military capability affected?

Is the mining likely to be avenged by terrorist acts against U.S. or Honduran interests?

Is the mining likely to attract sympathetic foreign support for the Sandinistas?

Would a US trade embargo materially worsen Nicaragua's condition?

Political.

5. Except for the failure to get its plight before the United Nations, Nicaragua had a good month--elections plans are going forward, there is support from abroad, particularly from the Socialist International, with technical assistance from a number of governments. The Sandinistas made concessions to the opposition--they seem more worried about the communist party than the democratic opposition. The concessions are limited: access to the media--severely limited--was one, and financial help to parties would be reduced if the opposition formed a coalition. So is the period of campaigning limited.

6. Allowing 16-year-olds to vote is hampering the opposition, as is their lack of unity and strategy. They are largely situated in Managua and the system of proportional representation even further limits their chances of gaining ground--we disagree with the Embassy projection that they could gain 30-40 of the 90 seats in contest. They must choose between boycotting the election and participating, which would give the election credibility but they would not do well. If they do not participate, they lose their status as opposition parties. International observers--on hand only to observe the mechanics of the election itself--will probably give it high marks.

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7. The events that might lead the Sandinistas to postpone the election would be significant urban operations from the insurgency--rather than in the countryside--or if the mining has severe results internally. So far the Directorate seems to be hanging together and differences between the hardliners and the moderates are obscured under the pressure of insurgency and mining.

8. Questions for the future:

Will the opposition boycott the election?

If they do, will they lose their leverage by not participating?

Will all opposition then be external to Nicaragua?

How will the election go off internationally?

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Grenada - Security.

10. Grenada lives from hand to mouth, with no money in the government coffers and with a 30 to 35% unemployment rate. But people are hopeful and feel secure with law and order provided by the United States MP's and the Caribbean Peacekeeping Force (CPF), but it is especially the US presence that provides reassurance. There is a general aversion to politics in the wake of Bishop's fall, but political discussion is picking up now. Parties are organizing and much political literature is being put around.

11. Eric Gairy is a baleful presence. He speaks of the US as the threat while most Grenadians consider the New Jewel Movement (NJM) to be the threat. The threat of the NJM is largely psychological--the fear of the unknown. The Jamaicans and the US police are respected and people hope they will stay into 1985. There is less respect for the rest of the CPF and none for the Grenadian police, which have low morale and lack training and leadership. Training is underway but they will not be on the streets until November or December.

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Grenada Politics

12. The Advisory Council is popular, as personified by Chairman Braithwaite. The major events coming up are the trial of the detainees which begins in April, the voter registration, and the election. Everything in Grenada seems to be done at the last minute but things are moving. This is caused largely by the council being slow, having to jump from one subject to the next without taking care of the first.

Major Political Parties and Personalities in Grenada

Party	Leader	Comments
New Jewel Movement	Kendrick Radix and George Louison (acting)	Leftist party formerly headed by Maurice Bishop . . . took power in coup of 1979 and governed until October 1983 . . . disorganized since Bishop's death.
Grenada Democratic Party	Francis Alexis	Formerly the Grenada Democratic Movement . . . exile group during the Bishop regime, based in Trinidad and the US . . . left of center and seeking broad-based coalition.
National Democratic Party	George Brizan	Formed in January to present an alternative to Grenada Democratic Party and Grenada National Party . . . seeking support of both young and old . . . Brizan is inexperienced politically.
Grenada National Party	Herbert Blaize	Conservative party formed in the 1950s . . . has an older constituency . . . traditionally backed by businessmen.
Grenada United Labor Party	Eric Gairy	Governing party from the 1950s until coup of 1979 . . . rightist and known for eccentricities of Gairy and its repressive measures . . . supported primarily by older generation.

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13. Eric Gairy ran a repressive regime in the past, but he now claims to have 20-30% of the people behind him. This is doubtful, although he does command some support among older people and in the rural areas. Right now he cannot find candidates to run on his proposed ticket. The democrats fear him and will have to organize well to defeat him.

14. There is no party on the left: The former New Jewel Movement (NJM) people have had a disappointing time with their Maurice Bishop Memorial Foundation which they hoped to use to build support. It is not known yet if they will run a slate in the election. They are not now a political threat but are a security threat in the long term.

15. Herbert Blaize of the Grenada National Party (GNP) is the stumbling block to forming a centrist coalition. He lives in unreality with little grass roots support. He sees no need to form a coalition with others. George Brizan has youth support, partly because he is a teacher. He would like to get Blaize to join him in a coalition. The Grenada Democratic Movement (GDM) is made up of a group of exiles that returned. They are impressive people, but out of the picture and not on people's minds. They would be willing to join a coalition.

16. There is so much satisfaction with the status quo at the moment along with fear of the election that there is talk of a referendum to postpone the election. Despite all this, we expect that by summer they will get it all together and the typical Grenadian mudslinging will begin.

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El Salvador

The Election.

17. Jose Napoleon Duarte seems able to take the second round, without entering into a formal agreement with the PCN, and he would do very well with it. It is difficult to know how people will vote: The PCN certainly cannot be delivered to either Duarte or Roberto D'Aubuisson as a block. Even if Ernesto Guerrero were to tell PCNers to vote for Duarte, the military department commanders could exert enough influence in the countryside to swing much of the vote the other way.

The Guerrillas.

18. The guerrillas had difficulty coordinating their approach to the election. They threatened voters, confiscated cedulas, prevented voting in the areas they control, and occupied some small towns. They probably prevented voting in at least 40 municipalities perhaps 50--they claimed 90.

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The electricity black-outs heightened tension. The government by its actions may have preempted any major attacks with operations against guerrilla base camps, by reacting well to intelligence, and by keeping the tactical initiative.

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